

territory and operating under the noses of international monitors? What leader could tolerate threats against ethnic Georgians in South Ossetia while foreign “volunteers” from Kuban, Abkhazia and Trans-Dniester arrived to fight Georgians—as happened in July 2004? What leader could tolerate separatists whose loyalty is to a foreign country and whose closest connections are with the intelligence services and criminal mafias of that country?

It should surprise no one that President Saakashvili began to take steps for the peaceful reincorporation of South Ossetia into Georgia. It should surprise no one that the Russian media portrayed President Saakashvili as rash, reckless, and irresponsible for his efforts. Surprisingly, Russian propaganda was picked up by some in the western media who portrayed democratically elected President Saakashvili's efforts toward national integration as impulsive or erratic. They were not. They were a legitimate effort to reach a peaceful resolution in accordance with international law.

In July, South Ossetian forces captured Georgian policemen operating legally in Georgian territory. The Georgian police were disarmed, detained, and paraded in a deliberately humiliating fashion—made to kneel in the town square before Ossetian women while TV cameras filmed everything. Yet, Georgia did not retaliate. In July, Georgian forces intercepted an illegal shipment of air-to-ground missiles for helicopters. The Russians claimed they were for their “peacekeepers” who didn't even have helicopters—a claim so dubious as to be ludicrous. Yet, the Georgians promptly offered to return the missiles to the Russians.

Despite relentless provocations, Georgia continues to search for a peaceful political solution. President Saakashvili has offered far-reaching autonomy status for South Ossetia, including complete freedom to use the Ossetian language—the issue that originally sparked conflict in 1991. Georgia has continually tried to expand the mandate and mission of the OSCE, including monitoring of the vital road link at the Roki tunnel between Georgia and Russia. Russia blocks any expansion, and the OSCE remains paralyzed.

This is where things stand today. On one side is a democratic ally of the United States backed by international law. On the other side is a criminal regime sustained by Russians who have not reconciled themselves to the loss of the Soviet Empire. The United States needs to do more to help our Georgian friends. We should work with the European Union on a joint diplomatic approach so that democratic Georgia is not outnumbered and to avoid the ever-present Russian veto. In the OSCE and the U.N., we should push for expanded monitoring and for genuine peacekeeping forces independent of Russian military and intelligence forces. If this draws a Russian veto, let Russia ex-

plain its veto. In the wake of appropriate sympathy for all the Russian victims of separatist terrorism, we should force Russia to explain and justify its continued support for separatists in Georgia. We must also be clear about the ultimate outcome. There will be no independence and there will be no incorporation into Russia for South Ossetia. The only solution for South Ossetia is within a sovereign Georgia.

Finally, the U.S. should increase our assistance to Georgia, especially our military assistance. The Georgia Train and Equip Program, GTEP, was very successful in improving Georgian capabilities so that terrorists in Georgia's Pankisi Gorge were killed, apprehended, or forced out. Unfortunately, GTEP was halted after the training of one battalion. GTEP should be reinstated to further increase Georgian capabilities. A strong Georgia is the best guarantee of deterring Russian or South Ossetian military action. A strong and secure Georgia is the best guarantee for the patience required for a multilateral diplomatic solution. And a strong and secure Georgia is in America's interest. Despite all the problems Georgia faces internally and externally, they have deployed troops to fight at our side in Afghanistan and in Iraq. Georgia is a steadfast ally in the war on terror.

THANKING BOB KENNEY AND WISHING HIM WELL

Mr. LAUTENBERG. Mr. President, I rise today to thank Robert (“Bob”) Kenney, a lawyer with the Environmental Protection Agency, EPA, for his significant contributions to my office this year as a Brookings Legislative fellow. We will miss his contributions, experience and knowledge, but it is heartening to know that EPA's rank and file includes dedicated and capable civil servants like Bob.

Bob has worked at EPA for over 30 years implementing our clean air, clean water, and toxics laws. This is Bob's second year as a fellow in the Senate. In 1990, he helped draft parts of the Clean Air Act Amendments, the Oil Pollution Act, and Clean Water Act. He will return later this month to his role as senior counsel at EPA, and I hope his experience in the Senate this year proves helpful to him in his future endeavors.

I would like to mention some of the specific contributions Bob made to my office and to our country. Bob took the lead in developing legislation I am introducing today to amend the Oil Pollution Act. Two weeks ago, my home State of New Jersey suffered a devastating oil spill in the Delaware River. The consequences for our natural resources and economy will take some time to assess, but it is clear they will be substantial. In response to that spill and to provide incentives to shippers to shift to safer double-hull vessels faster, the Oil Spill Liability Act of 2004 would phase out the liabil-

ity cap for single-hull tankers. The bill would double the liability limits for double-hull vessels and facilities since those limits have not changed since they were established 14 years ago. I thank Bob for his hard work on this important bill.

Bob also took the lead on the brownfields tax provision that was successfully added to the JOBS bill which became law this year, Public Law 108-357. We all have so-called brownfields in our States—the long-abandoned manufacturing facilities—and we know how important it is to get these properties cleaned up and put back productive use. My amendment provides developers interested in brownfields with greater access to capital—alleviating what developers say is their number one problem when it comes to investing in these properties and sites. It does this by exempting funds which originate with tax-exempt entities, such as pension funds and university endowments, from being subject to the “unrelated business income tax” or UBIT, when those funds are used to clean up and re-sell large brownfield properties. This provision will give developers access to up to \$7 trillion in assets. It represents a tremendous opportunity, potentially, for new jobs and a cleaner environment.

Based on Bob's research and recommendation, I worked to ensure that fiscal year 2005 funding to control the Asian longhorned beetle, ALB, ended up being more than triple the President's budget request. The ALB is a wood-boring insect native to China and Korea that has invaded New York, Illinois, and New Jersey via shipping containers. The beetle kills a wide variety of hardwood trees, but has a preference for sugar maples. In New Jersey, this insect's lethal damage to our forests is spreading, and these extra funds will help to combat that destruction.

I also thank Bob for his work on the New Jersey Coastal Heritage Trail, a Coastal Restoration bill, a bill to protect captive exotic animals, and many other projects. It has not been an easy year to promote, what I believe, are common sense environmental protections and initiatives, so we did not achieve all the successes we had hoped for during the year. But Bob's impact will last far beyond his stay here in the Senate.

It has become fashionable in some quarters to bash Government employees. This is unfortunate and unfair. I have to say that since I became a United States Senator, I have been impressed by the hard work and professionalism of the public servants I have encountered. Bob is no exception. He has tremendous expertise, he is diligent, and he obviously cares for our country. I appreciate his service during the past year he has been a member of my staff, more importantly, I appreciate an entire career spent in selfless service to our Nation. I extend my best wishes to Bob as he returns to EPA and resumes his career there.

FLEET RESERVE ASSOCIATION CELEBRATES ITS 80TH ANNIVERSARY

Mr. MCCAIN. Mr. President, November 11 marked the 80th anniversary of the Fleet Reserve Association, FRA, whose original charter was issued in Philadelphia, PA. FRA is the oldest and largest professional military organization representing the men and women serving in, or retired from the United States Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard.

The Fleet Reserve Association is named after the Fleet Naval Reserve program, which allows sailors with 16 or more years of active enlisted service to separate from the Navy, but remain "on call" for periods of national emergency.

From its inception, FRA's purpose was to advocate for sailors' rights. The association started with the efforts of a few enlisted men in 1919, who pooled their monies to send two Navy chief petty officers to testify before Congress on pay reform. Since that time, FRA has established an enviable track record of promoting favorable legislation for members of the Naval Service.

In 1923, FRA's efforts resulted in legislation that allowed WWI veterans to count their commissioned or warrant service toward time requirements for transfer to the Fleet Naval Reserve.

In the 1930's, the FRA helped with legislation that eliminated the requirement for enlisted retirees to pay for rations while hospitalized in Government treatment facilities, mandated death gratuities be paid to the estate of recalled servicemembers who died on active duty, authorized commissary privileges for military widows, and restored reenlistment bonuses.

FRA's "Hospital Rights" and "Widow's Equity" studies also helped foster the creation of the Civilian Health Program of the Uniformed Services, CHAMPUS, in 1966 and the adoption of the Uniformed Services Survivor Benefit Program, USSBP, in 1972.

FRA's 1999 study on military pay also set the stage for the targeted pay hikes for mid-grade enlisted personnel over the last few years, the repeal of the 1986 military retirement system (Redux), authorization of sea pay for junior enlisted personnel, and the reduction of additional "out-of-pocket" housing costs for servicemembers living in civilian housing.

On top of its award-winning legislative advocacy work, the FRA continues to promote community service at their 300-plus branches located throughout the world. In 2004 they awarded \$90,000 in college scholarships and \$75,000 to worthy students who competed in the FRA's Americanism Essay Contest.

Mr. President, I thank the Fleet Reserve Association for its eight decades of service to the men and women of the Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard. As we close the 108th Congress, and look ahead toward the 109th Congress, I wish the Fleet Reserve Association continued success and look forward to working with them to support the past, present, and future member of all of

the military services who protect our great Nation.

TRIBUTE TO JOHN LITTLE

Mr. SESSIONS. Mr. President, today I rise to pay tribute to an outstanding staffer who has worked for me for the past 7 years. John Little came to my office as a legislative correspondent in August of 1997 after working on my first Senate campaign. He was a young lawyer who had just graduated from Cumberland School of Law in Alabama and was looking for a job in politics. I doubt at the time that he knew where this road would take him. He continued to work his way up the ladder in my office—becoming a research assistant, legislative counsel, and deputy legislative director. Then last year I asked him to take on the responsibility of being my legislative director. I'm pretty sure he didn't know what he was getting into when he said yes.

Since that time, I have had the privilege to work closely with John and see up close what many people notice when they first meet him. John is one of those people who epitomizes Teddy Roosevelt's adage "speak softly and carry a big stick." In fact, a quotation hangs in his office that says "a closed mouth gathers no feet." While he is often quietly working in the background, John has consistently demonstrated his desire to serve the people of Alabama through hard work and determination. He has served me well throughout his tenure in my office and has earned my respect, along with that of his colleagues, Members of Congress, and countless constituents. I have watched him grow from a young staffer into a strong leader with a sound foundation in policy and the knowledge of the inner workings of Congress.

John has come a long way since his first days on the Hill. I've witnessed many of the accomplishments of his life, both personal and professional. I've seen him learn the ways of Alabama politics, pass the bar exam, staff his first Senate hearing, and meet and marry his wife. In fact, I have to take some credit for his marriage. John met his future wife, Mary Catherine, while he was working for me and she was working for Senator LOTT. Our offices were next to each other at that time, which led to more than one romance and marriage, including that of John and Mary Catherine.

John has worked hard and effectively on a number of important issues. He has contributed significantly to much legislation. His work on the No Child Left Behind Act and on the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, just a few weeks ago, was most noteworthy. John met with education officials, teachers, parents of disabled children, and lawyers to fully understand this important act and how to improve it. At the end he was ably assisted by my legislative assistant, Prim Formby, but I know he was very proud to see this important bill become law. He received great praise, and his work was favorably

mentioned by Senator GREGG and Senator KENNEDY.

Throughout all of these achievements and life experiences, John maintained his humility and strong work ethic and never wavered in his loyalty to me, my office, or the State. While I have shared in John's accomplishments to this point, his most recent achievement is bittersweet for me. John has accepted the Chief of Staff position with Senator-elect MEL MARTINEZ. This is a tremendous opportunity for John and a testament to his skill and knowledge as one of the finest staff members in the Senate. While I am sad to see him go, I am confident that he will serve Senator MARTINEZ in the same outstanding manner he has demonstrated over the past 7 years. From being elected president of his high school fraternity to serving as my legislative director, John has shown the strength of character and depth of knowledge which sets him apart as a truly great staffer. Phillip Brooks once said, "character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones." I have seen John's character in the small and great moments, and I know that he is ready to face this next challenge. John will be missed. I thank him for his service and wish him all the best in his new endeavor.

THANKING STAFF

Mr. EDWARDS. Mr. President, I recently came to the Senate floor to publicly thank my staff. Unfortunately, not all staff names were listed in the RECORD. Therefore, I enter the following names of my staff for the RECORD.

Tracy L. Allen; Laurie G. Armstrong; William O. Austin; Alexis Bar; Victoria Bassetti; Jared J. Bataillon; William Beane; Austina L. Bennett; Crystal M. Bennett; David G. Berard; Sonceria Ann Berry; Joshua L. Brekenfeld; Michael D. Briggs; Erica Buehrens; Derek H. Chollet; Marilyn J. Dixon; Charles R. Dorrier; Paul D. Dryden; Robert W. Elliott.

Justin E. Fairfax; Colette Forrest; Alice D. Garland; Katherine L. Garland; Laura Godwin; Robert Gordon; Steven K. Gryskiewicz; Wanda Haith; Peter Harbage Emma Harris; Kate G. Heath; Robert Hines; Lisa Hyman; Morgan Jackson; Stephanie Jones; Mildred J. Joyner; Jeremy Kyle Kinner; Jeffrey I. Kovick; James R. Kvaal; Miles M. Lackey.

Jeffrey Lane; Louise D. Learson; Lawrence (Andy) Magill; Maureen Mahon; Sharyn J. Malone; Kenneth F. Mansfield; Kathryn J. Marks; John J. Maron; Cory S. Meneses; Heather L. Messera; Sophie Milam; Blair B. Milligan; Joyce Mitchell; Carlos A. Monje; Kevin A. Monroe; Robert Morgan; Matthew L. Nelson; Elizabeth E. Nicholas; Ashley I. O'Bryant; Sacha M. Ostern.

Joseph W. Parry-Hill; Lauren Partner; Elizabeth Pegram; Philip J. Peisch; Sarah L. Pendergraft; Anthony Petty; Aaron S. Pickrell; Lesley Pittman; Sally Bussey Plyler; Mary Margaret Propes; Hunter L. Pruette; Jacqueline F. Ray; Karen A. Robb; David E. Roberts; Judith M. Rossabi; David A. Russell; Craig J. Saperstein; Heidi Schneble.